

with ice, these four birds seemed in good condition and they were busily engaged in finding an apparent abundance of food.

The latest record that I can find for this species in Massachusetts, is December 24 (Howe & Allen, *Birds of Mass.*, p. 42.)—WINTHROP S. BROOKS, *Milton, Mass.*

**An Albino Egg of Wilson's Plover.**—On May 20th, I found a nest of Wilson's Plover (*Ochthodromus wilsonius*) containing three eggs, one a perfect albino. As this egg in size, shape, and texture of shell, corresponds with the other two there seems to be no doubt but that the same bird laid them all. The nesting site was on a shell reef seldom visited by anyone.—GILBERT R. ROSSIGNOL, JR., *Savannah, Georgia.*

**Pigeons do not Carry their Eggs.**—Bendire in his 'Life Histories of North American Birds' quotes a statement from Mr. Otho C. Poling to the effect that the Band-tailed Pigeon may carry an egg "embedded in the feathers of the belly, and further, held by the legs while flying; but in such cases they seem simply to alight on a limb of a spruce and incubate there without any nest." The only tangible evidence Mr. Poling gives for this extraordinary conclusion, is to the effect that he has more than once, on shooting a female, found an egg embedded in the feathers of the belly. Bendire endorses neither the observations nor the conclusion, but says (p. 126):

"I have quoted, without further comment, the remarkable statement of Mr. Poling, in regard to the alleged removal of eggs by this pigeon."

The matter might have been allowed to rest, were it not that Knowlton, in his *Birds of the World* (p. 420) has quoted Mr. Poling's conclusion with approval, thus:

"It seems to be established beyond question that when the sitting bird is driven from the nest the egg is not infrequently carried along, being held close to the abdomen by the feet, and immediately on alighting on a limb incubation is resumed without any nest. On this point Mr. O. C. Poling, writing to Major Bendire, says:" etc.

Let us see whether the alleged habit is "established beyond question." The existence of such a habit is rendered extremely improbable, in the first place, by a consideration of the general behavior of pigeons. Pigeons never carry anything with their feet. I have seen pigeons tear up their nest with their bills and thus roll out two eggs that had failed to hatch; but this is very different from carrying the eggs. Again, a pigeon recognizes her egg only by the fact that it is in her nest. Put a strange egg in her nest and she will accept it as her own. Remove her own egg from the nest and place it "on a limb" and she has no means of knowing that it is her egg. Even in those cases, to be mentioned presently, in which I have seen a female carry an egg from the nest inadvertently, I believe she did not recognize it as an egg; at least, she did not sit on it outside the nest. Even if the female carried an egg from the nest and sat on it herself, it is hard to

conceive what would happen when it came time for the male to sit. Mr. Poling makes mention of the bird carrying only one egg. But the set consists of two eggs, and the birds do not incubate (though they may stand over the first egg and guard it) until the second egg is laid. The European Cuckoo, it is said, sometimes carries her egg in her bill (see summary of data, by Francis H. Herrick, in the *Journal of Experimental Zoology*, 1910). But such a habit is altogether foreign to the behavior of pigeons.

Hence, we must not believe that the Band-tailed Pigeon carries its eggs unless on the very best of evidence. Have we the best of evidence? Not at all. That a pigeon was shot with an egg embedded in the feathers of the belly indicates, not that the bird had carried the egg voluntarily, but that the egg had become accidentally fastened to the feathers. The egg may have been cracked or nicked, and glued to the feathers by the exuding albumen. I have seen even an unbroken egg carried about because stuck to the feathers by some albumen from a broken egg.—WALLACE CRAIG, *Orono, Maine*.

**Note on the Bald Eagle and Osprey.**—On a number of occasions I have had the good luck to see a Bald Eagle rob an Osprey of his hard-earned meal; but never, until last summer, had I seen the Osprey retaliate in any way whatever. Frequent observations have led me to look upon the latter bird as rather peaceable for a bird of prey, and strongly inclined to attend strictly to business.

On the occasion in question I came out on the shore of Lake Androscoggin, a considerable body of water in the Androscoggin River region of Maine, just in time to see an interesting combat, involving some very fine wing work. The Eagle had just forced the Osprey to drop a fish, but had failed to catch it as it fell. The smaller bird then withdrew to a point about fifty feet above, and suddenly swooping down, attempted to strike the Eagle on the back. Just as it looked certain that the broad back must receive the full force of the stroke, up went one great wing, with an agility and a skill that would have done credit to a practised boxer, and the Osprey was tossed aside with apparently almost no effort. This was repeated several times; when the Osprey, evidently discouraged, gave up the unequal fight and winged away toward the far side of the lake. Immediately the Eagle dropped to the water, and picking up the fish made off with it.

Throughout the performance, the difference between the birds in build and action was very striking: the Eagle, broad, heavy, apparently slow and clumsy — deceptively so, as the event showed; the Osprey, slender, undulating, all agile grace and skill.—FREEMAN F. BURR, *White Plains, N. Y.*

**Maynard's Cuckoo** (*Coccyzus minor maynardi* Ridgway) in Cuba.—On March 9, 1912, I secured a female specimen of the Mangrove Cuckoo, along the bay at "Manati," Guantanamo, Cuba. Not being sure as to